

State of the Department Report

Charleston, South Carolina, Police Department



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October 1, 2007

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INTRODUCTION

The state of the Charleston Police Department can be described in the following manner: transformation, challenge, and opportunity.

The Charleston Police Department is the largest municipal police organization in the State of South Carolina. It is a full service department entrusted with providing law enforcement services to residents of and visitors to the City of Charleston.

Crime and the fear of crime are the two most critical factors facing any community when evaluating and measuring its quality of life. While there are many other factors such as property values, economic development, corporate investment decisions, quality of public education, recreation opportunities, and transportation systems that impact community growth and prosperity and define the future, crime and the fear it creates can substantially alter these elements. Therefore, the measure of any successful law enforcement organization is intimately connected to its ability to impact crime and its associated fear.

In October 2006 after being appointed Chief of Police, I joined a Department with a substantial number of high performing police officers and civilian employees. They were dedicated and eager to assist me in the development of an organizational cultural, which focused the Department's efforts on increasing efficiencies and effectiveness that affirmatively addressed the City's crime problems.

In order to begin a process of transformation that would focus members of the Charleston Police Department more efficiently on providing public safety services to the community, me and my senior staff implemented changes that were designed to build effective organizational systems. While change is always difficult and normally results in varying levels of resistance from individuals and the organization, most Charleston Police Department members were ready for change and embraced the new opportunities. When given the chance to become engaged and actively participate in the change process, most employees of the Department enthusiastically stepped forward to vigorously engage in the process of bringing about a new organizational structure and operating philosophy.

Much has been accomplished in just over 11 months, including progress on:

- Intelligence Led Policing
- Department reorganization
- Development of a department vision statement, core values, and a strategic leadership plan
- Process improvements
- Community partnerships
- Law enforcement alliances

- Greater command staff accountability

Since October 2006, the Department has made and continues to make significant improvements. These improvements are designed to prepare the Charleston Police Department to meet future challenges successfully.

EVOLUTION IN POLICING

The law enforcement profession, similar to the majority of today's other businesses, continuously and rapidly evolves in sharp contrast to past eras. As such the profession frequently progresses by deploying new methods, techniques, and technologies which provide police officers and civilian support personnel with enhanced abilities to prevent, mitigate, and solve crimes. These evolving tools and information systems are vital for law enforcement to effectively fight the ever growing level of sophistications demonstrated by criminal offenders. Police officers can no longer wait weeks or even days to identify and analyze emerging crime trends and patterns. To do so would be a travesty that could result in severe consequences for individual victims and entire communities. Due to the increasing level of violent crimes, the ability of criminals to share information, and their ability to move rapidly across jurisdictions, it is imperative that law enforcement change its paradigm from one of reaction to preemption. The new policing paradigms which rely on timely and accurate intelligence require police personnel to detect critical crime information in real time and respond effectively and rapidly.

In order to change the previous methodology and provide Charleston Police Department officers with the tools and information necessary to target and preempt crime within the community, we began to focus on activities that add value to the community. These strategies maximize the use of police resources by using objective measurements to assess police service needs, the response to those needs, performance outcomes and staff accountability. Through data analysis and the development of actionable intelligence the Department has been able to begin focusing its resources on problems that have the most significant impact on the community.

These strategies also include process improvement methods. The Department has conducted internal assessments to identify activities which do not add value to the community or that drain resources away from critical community responses such as saturation patrols, undercover investigations, targeted offenders, and roadway safety initiatives. Additionally, an aggressive improvement process is underway to stop on-duty resources supplementing special events that are not sponsored or supported by the City. This initiative has already allowed additional resources to be redirected for use in narcotic interdiction and roadway safety enhancements. Furthermore, through communication with officers and command staff members, the Department has identified other activities that have taken officers away from their primary crime-fighting mission.

These efforts, which incorporate the input from all levels of the organization, are intended to continuously evaluate the organization's internal processes affording us the ability to maximize organizational performance by eliminating or reducing operational defects. Through continuous process improvement, those activities which are not adding value to the organization's efforts are reduced or eliminated. Tasks not requiring police officer attention are reassigned to other personnel when appropriate or possibly diverted to other entities that are better suited for the task. The dividends in time and cost savings realized by this

process are reinvested into the activities most likely to impact public safety and reduce crime by police action.

This strategic approach ensures that police resources are applied in a manner that maximizes the investment a community makes in its police department.

Using this continuous process improvement mentality to maximize resource allocation and availability, the Charleston Police Department will continue its transformation to ensure we reach our vision of being a world class law enforcement agency that stays on the cutting edge of police performance excellence, while striving to set the standard for others to follow.

Leadership Development

To reach this vision, it will require more than simply improving processes. To truly reach our vision of being a world class organization, we will be required to develop and grow leadership. To accomplish this essential task, I have initiated a leadership development process within the Department. Currently, this initiative focuses efforts on all newly promoted leaders; however, it will soon be expanded to include all organizational members.

This tiered process will begin when new members join the Department and build throughout their career. It will include career development processes for front line officers, as well as socialization models for formal leaders. These models will combine reading assignments, reflective writings, classroom instruction, and on-line courses. Through this comprehensive process, the Department will develop and grow leaders for the future while creating a structure for lifelong learning. This learning will be the foundation which keeps the organization fresh and on the cutting edge of new ideas and opportunities.

DEPARTMENT PROGRESS

Intelligence Led Policing

One of the procedures resulting in significant change in the philosophical workings of the Charleston Police Department came from the implementation of an Intelligence Led Policing model. One of the key components of this model in the Charleston Police Department is a modified version of COMPSTAT, an acronym for “computer comparison statistics.” COMPSTAT helps police detect problem areas within the community and assist them in identifying methods and resources needed to strategically address crime in those areas.

The tenants of this approach focus on four specific areas:

- Timely and accurate intelligence
- Effective tactics
- Rapid deployment
- Relentless follow-up

COMPSTAT provides a forum to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of a department’s response to crime trends and holds police personnel responsible for the outcomes.

COMPSTAT reflects the paradigm of modern policing: accountability at all levels of a police agency. In so doing, it presents an opportunity to develop and identify leaders and improve the leadership process.

Intelligence Led Policing and COMPSTAT are perhaps the two single most important organizational and administrative innovations in policing during the last decade.

When properly implemented, these two initiatives drive members in an organization towards proactive solutions and help to reduce the shotgun approach, crisis-driven response that hinders long-term planning and progress.

At COMPSTAT meetings, the Chief of Police and his senior leaders review performance data, consisting of geographical mapping, statistical references, and current intelligence information. For instance, COMPSTAT for a team includes detailed information about categories of crime with a discussion of patterns, targets (victims and locations) and methods of operation. Regardless of the area reviewed, the COMPSTAT process focuses all employees on the critical activities of the organization. This focus produces creative questions and solutions that may involve members of the organization, other city employees, residents and the business community.

Intelligence Led Policing and COMPSTAT are proven means for effectively controlling crime. The process, however, is only as good as the data available for analysis. During the implementation of these initiatives at the Charleston Police Department, it was discovered that the department's record management system required upgrades to provide maximum results.

The identified upgrades are currently being addressed and the Department should have the technological solutions in place by Fall 2008. This project is one of my highest priorities and has received significant support from all areas of City government to make this a reality. In fact, the project time thus far has been expedited due to the commitment and support from the Mayor's Office, CFO, City's IT director and his staff.

An unexpected benefit of this project is associated with the selection and evaluation method being used. Unlike past projects where decisions were made unilaterally by the senior executives, this process has been collaborative and brought members from various departments together to design a system that can be beneficial to the entire city. Additionally, end-users were part of the evaluation team to ensure that the system selected considered not just technical requirements and needs, but also the input from those operating in the field.

However, until the new CAD/RMS system is in place so that the Department can produce timely, relevant and accurate management information, we will not be capable of fully implementing the COMPSTAT process and thus, will not be able to reach its full potential in terms of enhancing accountability at all levels and focusing the Department's crime-fighting activities.

Reorganization

The reorganization of the Department has been another significant initiative to move toward a more strategic and focused crime-fighting organization.

The previous structure of the Department was not consistent with operational goals or functions. Consequently, subordinate commands with closely connected functions were often operating with conflicting priorities.

The reorganization divided the department by function into the Operations Bureau, Investigative Bureau, and the Administrative Bureau. It also built in a higher level of accountability for commanders and supervisors, because they now control most of the resources necessary to fight crime or support the crime-fighting mission.

Under the reorganization, detectives were realigned. This not only allowed detectives to work alongside patrol officers in their crime-fighting efforts, but allowed detectives to have more interaction with the community. Also, detectives' work hours (primarily daytime Monday - Friday) were expanded to include nights and weekends so that work time corresponds closely to the time that crime occurs.

By realigning the detectives, communication between the investigators and patrol officers has improved, police presence in the community has increased and the department's ability to fight crime strategically has been enhanced.

Changes also occurred throughout the Department in areas where sworn officers were conducting jobs that did not require that expertise. Most notably was the hiring of Duty Officers to take over the Desk operation. This allowed for eight sworn officers to be removed from the Records Section and be utilized in a transport capacity, which enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the patrol officers. Through the use of transport officers, patrol units were able to stay in service and provide ongoing security to the community.

The Charleston Police Department is progressive in its use of civilian employees to perform functions that do not require sworn personnel. This philosophy will continue so that sworn officers can focus on the aspects of crime fighting that require the training and experience of police officers.

The Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) was created to improve the Department's intelligence capability and assist patrol and investigative activities throughout the Department. It has enhanced the Department's ability to identify and respond to various criminal activities and provide actionable intelligence regarding career criminals. The unit has also been instrumental in coordinating information among the region's crime analysis units. Under the direction of a commander who reports directly to the Chief of Police, the CIU provides effective intelligence planning and research. CIU monitors and develops intelligence information and liaisons with state and federal agencies on gang, organized crime, narcotics, and homeland security issues.

During the reorganization, we also created a Major Case Warrant Unit. The primary mission of this unit is to identify and apprehend those individuals who are wanted on serious felony violations. The investigators assigned to this unit are deployed to identify, track, and arrest those criminals in our community that commitment crimes classified as General Session charges and normally involve violent offenders.

Finally, to improve command oversight of operational units, a Command Duty Officer position was created. These three positions, which are staffed by lieutenants, provide command level oversight for police personnel in the field during the period 2 p.m. to 8 a.m., 7 days a week. By having this extra layer of supervision available at all times, the Department is able to ensure effective command and control during

serious or critical incidents. The CDOs have received training in Incident Command and operate vehicles that provide immediate access to specialized equipment needed by first-responders.

The reorganization of the department was a monumental step in a shift of culture within the organization that will have a substantial impact on how department employees carry out their mission in the future. COMPSTAT and other management systems will provide insight into the necessity for future changes or refinements. I will continue to refine the organizational structure to eliminate duplication, increase efficiencies and accountability in support of the Department's mission.

Partnerships

Police officers are rarely the witnesses or victims of crime. Officers need help from others to catch criminals and reduce criminal activity in the community. To be successful, the Charleston Police Department must cultivate relationships with residents, the private business sector and other law enforcement agencies. The healthier the relationships, the more likely law enforcement efforts will reduce crime and improve the community's quality of life. Over the past year, we have taken steps to enhance a culture within the department that recognizes the value of these relationships.

Citizen Advisory Groups (CAG)

The CAGS are an avenue for residents living within a Team area to meet and discuss neighborhood crime issues and solutions. On a bi-monthly basis, my senior staff and I meet with residents. The CAGS help to ensure that police resources are deployed to solve problems identified by the police and the community in partnership.

CAG meetings encourage police officers and residents to work together in their efforts to reduce crime. Through this cooperation, the ability to deal with crisis situations improves, resentments are diminished, and barriers are reduced.

Our long-term goal is to transition this initiative into a city-wide communication forum that includes additional agencies with information useful to the community. Other participants could be the Solicitor's Office and other city departments like Fire, Recreation, Public Service, Traffic and Transportation, and Parks. By including other organizations, we can enhance communication and cooperation internally and externally while identifying areas for service improvements.

Camp Hope

The Camp Hope Program is a partnership between the public schools, other volunteer groups and the Charleston Police Department, which focuses on "at risk youth." The Program runs from June to August. The five-week program brings together 30 plus community organizations to help offer an experience ripe with recreation, education, and social opportunities to children ranging in age from 7-12 during the evening hours. It teaches the students accountability on all levels; leadership and values; cultural arts and social behavior. The program also contains components that focus on physical fitness, life skills centering on decision making and mentoring.

Parents are also encouraged to join the students during the week to strengthen their bond. This past summer, approximately 50 students successfully completed the first program. It is anticipated that this program will grow substantially in the 2007-2008 school year and may be expanded to other parts of the city.

Additionally, the Department has expanded and/or created other opportunities for officers to interact directly with community members at various levels. These initiatives include the Civilian Volunteer Program, Citizens Police Academy, and a newly developed Youth Police Academy.

Law Enforcement Alliances

Criminals do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Charleston residents are affected by crime and criminals that have ties not only to other Charleston County cities, but also to other states and internationally. The Charleston Police Department must make concerted efforts to join forces with other local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to combat crime effectively within the City. To this end, we have formed major alliances with other law enforcement agencies on a local, state and federal level.

While Charleston has partnered with other agencies in the past, we have formalized these relationships in an effort to increase information sharing and accountability throughout Charleston County.

We initiated two investigative forums that facilitate information sharing between agencies. On a monthly basis, investigators from around the region meet to discuss ongoing cases and any trends or patterns impacting crime in the low country. These forums became a reality after Chief Zumalt, from the North Charleston Police Department, and I partnered together in an unwavering effort to band together to positively impact crime fighting abilities. Currently, the meetings bring together multiple agencies with over 25 attendees on a regular basis.

Federal Partnerships

Stronger alliances with federal agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the United States Marshall and the United States Attorney's Office have improved direct communication on issues of mutual importance. On a quarterly basis, senior leaders from the organizations meet to discuss cases, strategies, and opportunities to impact crime in the Charleston area. Since the inception of this cooperation, more than 50 violent offenders have been arrested and confined due to the collaborative efforts of these agencies. This cooperation has had a significant impact on violent crime in the City of Charleston. Working closely with our federal partners gives the Charleston Police Department personnel access to law enforcement information, additional prosecutorial options and relevant federal resources and training.

Professional Organizations

In the spring of 2007, the police departments in the cities of Charleston and North Charleston contracted with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and the University of South Carolina to conduct an

analysis of violent crime impacting the two cities. PERF is a nationally recognized organization of progressive police executives from large law enforcement agencies throughout the United States and Europe. The PERF review identified a number of areas where the community and law enforcement could work together to impact crime; however, they also recognized that many of the recommendations are already being implemented within the Department.

The Charleston Police Department has also accepted an invitation by PERF to participate in the Digital Six Sigma Program being conducted by PERF and Motorola. This program seeks to have law enforcement agencies explore how Six Sigma principles can be used to improve processes. As one of only 4 participants, the Charleston Police Department will receive the opportunity to identify two process improvement initiatives that will help enhance our overall operations and service delivery.

This initiative will provide basic six sigma training for all of the Charleston Police Department command staff at minimal cost to the Department. This partnership will enable all command staff members to learn Six Sigma technology so that new and creative applications of the concept can be applied in the Charleston Police Department to improve processes and help instill cultural and operational changes.

Sharing of information between law enforcement agencies and law enforcement professionals is necessary to fight crime proactively. Much is learned when professionals explore new methods of policing collectively. Without a doubt, the Charleston Police Department's operations will continue to improve by our engagement at the local and national level in the research and development of new policing practices.

Private Sector

In addition to the residential community, the private sector reaps the benefits of a local police agency that fights crime effectively. When a department shares its direction with the business community and it is clear that the direction will improve the environment in the city, businesses are willing to contribute to the crime-fighting mission. We have begun to share our vision with various business organizations and the response has been positive. Currently, we are working with several local hospitality organizations to bring a Tourist Safety and Security Association Conference to the city in 2009, which will serve as the East Coast host for this national organization.

Additionally, we will be launching a "Worker on Watch" program that will enlist city departments and businesses to assist us in making neighborhoods and businesses safer. This program will encourage workers who regularly travel throughout the community to be more vigilant and observant about suspicious or unusual activity and report that information to police.

THE NEXT STEP

Since October 2006 the Charleston Police Department has taken significant steps towards focusing its crime fighting capabilities. Much has been accomplished, however, there is still a great deal to be done. The key to the future includes focusing the Department's attention on a variety of initiatives such as:

Technology Upgrades

The Department will soon increase its crime fighting and prevention capabilities through the installation of a new CADS/RMS data system. This new technology will give police officers the ability to search through thousands of internal records and interface with other agencies in a matter of minutes. This technology revolutionizes police work by providing street officers and analyst the ability to identify trends and patterns associated with crime in real time. It will eliminate the wasted time currently associated with connecting people, places and crime patterns that currently take hundreds of investigative hours to establish when performed manually. This technology allows for a very robust search and information management system that frees up personnel, sworn and civilian, to act on the information and concentrate on other activities. With the help of this technology, Charleston Police Department personnel will be able to spend more time on investigating criminal activity and working with the community.

Risk Management

The Professional Standards Office (PSO) has enhanced its Early Warning System. The automated database will track citizen and internal complaints and provide leaders the ability to identify potential problems before they create significant concerns for individual officers and the organization. Additionally, this database will provide real time information concerning use of force and other risk management issues. Through the use of this system, commanders will be alerted automatically should officers reach predetermined thresholds of specific events. This will include citizen complaints, use of force, automobile accidents, officer or citizen injuries and pursuits. Once the alerts occur, commanders will evaluate the information and determine what, if any, action is necessary to address the situation. This system will afford the organization the ability to monitor areas within the Charleston Police Department that create the greatest degree of exposure to liability, loss of resources and detect warning signs concerning personnel or systems' underperformance. This approach will allow the Department to monitor events and be preventive instead of reactive. This will provide multiple positive outcomes for the Department and community. It will save resources relating to losses associated with injuries to police personnel and lawsuits, as well as help reduce negative impacts on officers and community relationships.

Recruiting, Hiring, and Retention

Police recruiting and hiring has been identified by the International Association of Chief of Police as a major priority for the 21st century. Currently, the Charleston Police Department has a robust recruitment effort underway with a significant pool of qualified applicants. However, it faces a dilemma in two areas: officer training allocations and retention. For the organization to be successful and continue to meet the demands of growth and development these two areas must be addressed.

We have undertaken steps in both areas to address the issues in an affirmative manner. Currently, we are working with other area law enforcement leaders to lobby State officials to adopt a regional academy approach to training. If implemented, this would allow low country agencies to expand their training capability and meet the staffing demands facing the organizations.

Additionally, I am proposing a Professional Enhancement System that would encourage officers at all levels of the organization to continue to grow and develop their value to the Charleston Police Department. In return for this additional growth and development, the organization will offer financial incentives

throughout the individual's career. This system will address the retention issues which occur when officers reach their salary maximums and feel restricted. This system will provide hope of additional opportunity but require the officer to take affirmative responsibility for their career. This will continue to keep the Charleston Police Department competitive in this increasingly difficult marketplace.

THE FUTURE

A City cannot work well unless its police department works effectively. That is why tremendous effort has been put forth over the past 11 months to focus the Charleston Police Department's crime-fighting and prevention methods.

In the coming year, we will continue our transformation process. Our emphasis will be on:

- Using timely and accurate information to prevent and fight crime
- Continuing to develop positive community and business relationships
- Maintaining a Quality of Life emphasis
- Modernizing equipment and technology
- Improving training

Additionally, the organization will implement a number of innovations. They include:

- Enhancing partnerships with probation and parole
- Increasing warrant enforcement
- Expanding gang awareness and prevention strategies
- Improving gun violence strategies
- Promoting drug demand strategies
- Implementing a Police Training Officer (PTO) program
- Initiating alcohol safety and compliance initiatives
- Exploring CCTV monitoring for targeted areas
- Continuing to encourage legislative reform in the areas of bonding and violent crime designations
- Creating a Youth Police Academy
- Implementing a "Workers on Watch" Program

Our efforts are creating an agile, attentive, accountable, accessible and problem-solving department for the community. We have focused and reorganized the Department, increased police visibility in the community, and redeployed officers to address the community's growing needs. We are concentrating on reducing the major crime index in collaboration with the community and other policing agencies.

However, the Department is far from done. The City of Charleston continues to grow and evolve. The anticipated Magnolia Development and continued residential and commercial expansion in the West Ashley area will necessitate additional police officers and police facilities to meet the increased demands for service and to ensure the City is a safe place to live, work and play.

In order for the Charleston Police Department to keep up with the growing demands for its services, it is imperative that major capital improvement be made. Some of these projects include:

- Additional police stations strategically located to meet the City's future growth and development
- Follow on phases of the RMS/CADS upgrade
- Security cameras for high crime areas and tourist zones
- Specialized vehicles relating to Critical Incident Management

When police departments fail to plan for growth, communities generally experience an increase in crime. Therefore, it is imperative we develop a plan today for tomorrow's public safety needs.

Our plan has been set out in the Department's Strategic Leadership Plan. This plan identifies five key goals that will provide direction and clarity for the continued growth and evolution of the Department.

- Reducing crime and the fear of crime
- Partnering with the community to resolve neighborhood concerns and enhance the quality of life in Charleston
- Improving police response and data collection through the use of leading edge technology
- Recruit, retain, and develop quality human resources
- Improve internal administrative processes and systems that support service delivery

By utilizing these goals as filters for decision-making regarding staffing, deployment, and budgetary expenditures, we will reach our vision of being a world class law enforcement agency. There is no doubt that the Charleston Police Department has the potential and talent to move from being a good department to a great department. Our challenge is clear and we are committed. We expect the best from ourselves and the community deserves no less. Together, we will set the standards for others to follow as a Police Department and City.